



*An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada*

2011 December 18  
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sacrament of Baptism  
Reception of Members



### **Statement of Welcome and Inclusion**

In response to God's call, we, the congregation of Robertson-Wesley United Church declare our commitment to opening our hearts and our church family to all people in our community, regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, differing abilities, ethnicity, or economic circumstance. We recognize that many people's lives continue to be devastated by hatred, prejudice, and inequality, therefore, as a compassionate and caring spiritual community we will stand with those who are adversely affected by injustice, alienation and oppression.

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## Friends in Christ

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Prelude: *Procession, Wolcum Yole!, That Yongë Child, Balulalow, Spring Carol* (from *Ceremony of Carols*), Benjamin Britten

*Soloists:* Alyssa Kraus & Ashley Doiron, Sarah Austin,  
Aanchel Gupta & Gemma Marcinkoski  
Keri Lynn Zwicker, harp and Cantilon Chamber Choir

Greeting

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

*(Leader reads plain text; people read **bold text**)*

The angel said to Mary,  
**“Be not afraid!”**

The angel said to the Shepherds,  
**“Be not afraid!”**

The angel says to us,  
**“Be not afraid, for I bring good news of great joy.”**

Unto us this day, and each day of our lives,  
**The Christ child is born.**

Let us sing and celebrate!  
**Let us worship our God!**<sup>1</sup>

Hymn: *The Candle's Flame Grows Strong*, Paul Chappel

*(Tune: SEE AMID THE WINTER'S SNOW, Voices United 76)*

**1 Hope and love and joy and peace  
Gifts of God that still increase;  
Love comes down to ev'ryone  
Through the birth of God's great Son.  
Images swirl 'round our heads,  
Since we've thought, and prayed, and read  
In our quest for life that's real,  
Close to God whose love we feel.**

**2 Helping others is our call,  
Though our goals may sometimes fall,  
God has mercy to go 'round  
Urging us to swell the sound:  
"We must raise our banners high,  
Live our message and apply  
Peace and hope to ev'ry day,  
Giving joy and love always!"**

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Richard Bott, St. Andrew's U.C., Maple Ridge, B.C. (richardbott.com). Gathering, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2011-2012 page 28. Used with permission.

**3 Now the candle's flame grows strong,  
Bringing Light to dark and wrong,  
Helping us to see ahead  
Jesus in the manger bed.  
Hope uplifts so peace can grow,  
Love and joy, entwined, we know  
Bring new Life through Jesus when  
He is born on earth. Amen!**<sup>2</sup>

Coming Into God's Presence

Rev. Karen Bridges

Lighting the Advent Candle

(*More Voices* 220)

**Love shines as the solitary star,  
faith is the inner light.  
You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,  
and illumine the pathway home.**

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*Sacrament of Baptism and Reception of Members*

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**Layla Janet Vivian Fox**

*Membership Ctte: Brenda Sheppard*

*Daughter of Rowan & Joel Fox*

*(Leader reads plain text; people read **bold text**)*

**Pat Austin** *Reaffirmation*

**Hali and Tony Norrad** *Transfer of membership*

Prayer for the Holy Spirit (*in unison*)

**Eternal God, whose Son the Servant-Lord Jesus Christ has  
commissioned us to make disciples of people of all nations  
baptizing them in your name, bless this child Layla, now to be  
baptized and bless Pat, Tony and Hali as they join with us today  
according to your Word and in the power of Your Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

Congregation's Promise (*standing*)

In response to God's great love, do you, the members of Robertson-Wesley United Church, receive Layla, Pat, Hali and Tony, as we have been received, and promise to support all of God's children in your care with constant love, wholesome example, Christian teaching and faithful prayer?

**Yes, we do, in the power of the Spirit.**

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Chappel, 2011 Nov 16. Dedicated to Tammy-Jo Mortensen, my colleague and friend, who inspired me to write this hymn.

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*in unison*)

**God of our fathers and mothers and of our children, with joy we praise you, we thank you, we honour you. For the gift of life embodied in children, we thank you. For this sacrament by which they are received into your family, we honour you. Gracious God, keep all children in truth as they grow in mind and body. Keep all parents in your love as they grow and guide their children in truth. Keep us all faithful to the Covenant of Life. Amen.**

Blessing (*sung*)

(*Voices United* 454)

**May God who creates you give you light;  
May God who sustains you make you wise;  
May God who protects you give you joy;  
May God who surrounds you give you peace.**

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*God's Holy Word*

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Scripture:

Greg Daly

Luke 1:26–38 · A virgin conceives

Anthem: *There is no Rose (Ceremony of Carols)*, Benjamin Britten

Luke 1:46–55 · Mary's song of praise: Magnificat

This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**Praise be to God for Christ, the Word made flesh.**

Anthem: *As dew in Aprille (Ceremony of Carols)*, Benjamin Britten

Sermon: *Beloved Mary*

Rev. Jim Allan

Silent Reflection

Hymn: *Song of Mary*

*Voices United* 899

Pastoral Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

(*Voices United* p. 921)

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*Grateful Response*

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Offering: *This Little Babe & Interlude (Ceremony of Carols)*, Britten

Offertory Hymn

(*Voices United* 55 vs 4)

**What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him—give my heart.**

The Peace:

*We greet the people near us with gestures of peace and words such as...*

May the peace of the promised Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

Hymn: *Joy is Now in Every Place*

*Voices United 45*

Benediction

Our God, who has done great things for us,  
sends us out as partners in the work of salvation.

**We are being saved day by day  
as we look forward to the coming of Jesus Christ.**

May we abound more and more in love,  
with all knowledge and discernment.

**God is bringing forth in us  
the fruits of righteousness.**

Go forth in the name of God's messenger  
to live out your baptism in servanthood.

**May the gospel be confirmed in us  
as we seek the excellence to which God calls us.**<sup>3</sup>

Postlude: *Deo Gratias and Recession (Ceremony of Carols)*, Britten

*Following worship, all are invited to the Memorial Hall  
for fellowship and refreshments.*

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<sup>3</sup> Reprinted, with permission, from *Refreshing Rains of the Living Word* by Lavon Bayler. Copyright © 1988 The Pilgrim Press. Page 5.

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## Music Notes

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Thanks so much to the Cantilon Chamber Choir, their conductor Heather Johnson, the soloists and harpist Keri Lynn Zwicker for their incredible special music this morning!

A Ceremony of Carols, Op. 28, is a choral piece by Benjamin Britten, scored for three-part treble chorus, solo voices, and harp. Written for Christmas, it consists of eleven movements, with text from *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems*, by Gerald Bullett; it is in Middle English. The piece was written in 1942 while Britten was at sea, going from the United States to England. Originally conceived as a series of unrelated songs, it was later unified into one piece with the framing processional and recessional.

Our ending song, which we used one verse per Sunday the last 3 Sundays in Advent is today sung in its entirety. The hymn came out of a conversation I had with my colleague Paul Chappel. Paul is a consummate church musician who played, writes, edits music volumes, and also preaches! I am so thrilled he was able to write this Advent text and combine it with a gentle Christmas carol.

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## Worship Thanks

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Today's head ushers are Morris and Carole Treasure  
Greeters: Joan & Gary Pecknold, Jim and Jean Triscott and Virginia Letwenuk  
Scripture Reader: Greg Daly

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Minister of Spiritual Development: Rev. Jim Allan  
Minister of Congregation and Community Development: Rev. Karen Bridges  
Director of Music: Tammy-Jo Mortensen  
Office Administrator: Tanya Eckenswiller  
Custodian: Brad Campbell

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10209 – 123 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5N 1N3  
Phone (780) 482-1587 · Fax (780) 482-1580  
mail@rwuc.org · www.rwuc.org